

BUTTE NEWS.

PLEAD THEIR CAUSE

Members of the Woman's Suffrage Association in Session.

STATE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Papers and Speeches by Ladies Whose Ambition is Great—The Church Crowded With Interested Listeners.

The women who are in convention in Butte to advance the cause of equal suffrage, held two very interesting sessions yesterday and the various phases of the question of woman's suffrage were discussed in a clear and thoughtful manner. In the afternoon the delegates present and ladies of the city, but there was a dearth of men. The ladies wish it distinctly understood that their sessions are open to the men and they want them to turn out and listen to the discussions and participate in them. Although men have not been so gracious as yet to accord equal rights to women, the women are ready to accord equal rights and privileges to the men and will give them every chance to express their views on the great question.

Mrs. Wilbur P. Sanders, the state president, occupied the chair during the afternoon. Mrs. W. W. Alderson acted as recording secretary. The first business was an address of welcome by Mrs. Isabel Giddon of this city, who spoke as follows:

"As citizens of Butte we are glad that the state convention of Equal Rights clubs is held here, and the delegates from other places will hardly need assurance that they are heartily welcomed to this the greatest mining camp on earth, and the largest city in Montana."

"The question in which the convention is interested has not, as yet, attracted as much attention in Butte as it has in other cities of Montana, though probably the size of our town and the fact that the vast majority of our residents are very fully occupied in business may be some explanation."

"And since it is true that the balance of legislative power lies in Silver Bow county we feel especially satisfied that this was selected as the meeting place for the present gathering, for we believe that the papers read and the addresses given and the debates that may result therefrom will be the means of arousing interest in our cause and lead to further inquiry into the advisability of submitting to the voters the question of equal suffrage, and so pave the way for putting Montana in the same class with those three great, progressive, twentieth-century states—Wyoming, Utah, and Colorado."

The response to this address of welcome was made by Mrs. Della Kellough of Helena, and was as follows:

Some of our good friends who have gathered here this evening may have come here revolving in their minds questions something like the ones that agitated Farmer Cornsloss who, as he entered the little low kitchen to set down a pail of spring water called out: "Mandy, ain't the Goddess of Liberty a female?"

"Course."

"Ain't Queen Victoria a lady?"

"Certainly."

"Ain't all our warships called she?"

"Invariably."

"Ain't the statue of Freedom in the feminine gender?"

"It is."

"Well, what do you 'manipulated women want anyhow'—the earth?"

"Something of what we do want we hope to show to the good people of Butte while sheltered in their hospitable homes; but as I am not like the immortal Job Trotter who 'had a gift of gab werry gallopin' so that his ideas knocked each other's heels,' I shall leave the persuasive presentation of our cause to the more eloquent tongues which shall address you later on during the sessions of the convention. Some objector to women having the right of franchise brought forward as a very strong argument that women ought not to vote, because when they were at their work over the wash tub, the ironing board and the cooking stove one never heard them discussing politics. That may be true. I presume it is so, if he says so, for he undoubtedly was one of those men who depended upon their wives to earn their living and thus was always hanging round at home to see that she did not waste any time while she was about it, else how would he have known what women talk about when at their work. I have always observed that the class of men who freely discuss political questions 'at all times' and in all sorts of weather, are men who are paid for their time, and who have no very serious scruples as to whether it is time with work or time with talking; but women who have a more conscientious regard for duties well performed and on time and with also a higher estimate of the divine right of suffrage and a keener sense of the 'eternal fitness of things' do not interpose the daily routine of homely and exhausting tasks to discuss with ludicrous conceit and witless logic the momentous questions of finance, tariff, protection, and foreign and domestic legislation. The question of making a tender and palatable of a two-bit joint and make it satisfy a family of ten besides the head of the family is all the finance they want or need, in the kitchen for one morning, and as they don't believe in mixing things, they very wisely throw their whole attention upon the absorbing economy of the present hour and thus accomplishing immediate and gratifying results send forth their better halves in a more suitable frame of mind for discussing 'the everlasting matters of the law,' than if they had dipped into the incomprehensible muddle of politics. Then having done their duty well and being left with a conscience void of offense toward all men, they can banish at once the annoying kitchen economies and turn from that discipline with equal readiness and acumen to the more fascinating questions of good government."

The more they study them the more clearly they see what have been the errors of the past one-sided rule, and the more they are convinced good government consists in government of the whole by the whole and not a part ruling all the parts without giving them any consideration or voice in the matter. Their life in the home has taught them they are the guardians of the home interests. Then they argue if that be true, is it not logically certain in a state whose object is to serve and conserve the home, that the guardians of the home are proper critics, judges and directors of the state, at least, insofar as the state deals with domestic questions? And what

are those but "finance, meaning wages, taxes, rents and interest, laws relating to descent, guardians, marriage, divorce, wills, public schools, public libraries, public amusements, benevolent institutions, reform schools, criminal children, orphans deserted and dependent infants, insane, feeble-minded and pauper women, minors, adulterated foods, city sanitation and public morals?" Women do have a voice in all these matters, but it is after the fashion of being sent to lock the barn after the horse is stolen. They heal the wounds and sympathize with the sorrows, their legislative ability might have helped to prevent, and the number of women engaged in this work of alleviation of binding up broken hearts and filling hungry mouths is as sixteen to one of the men engaged in direct legislation. Think you they are not competent to deal with such questions? Why you know Solomon's wisdom is accounted for on the fact that he had so many wives.

We have journeyed to Butte to show all these fathers, husbands and brothers what smart mothers, wives and sisters they have and how woefully blind they have been in the past not to have seen the stores of wisdom that lay at their very doors.

In Helena at one time when it was proposed to organize a club in a certain part of the city a woman arose and said emphatically, "Yes, let us organize, let us do something to get the best of the men." To-day we have come with the most laudable zeal in return for the pleasure, profit and gracious welcome you extend to us, to get the best of you—to win to our side your best men, to enroll in our ranks your best women, and then, in united lives and action, to go on seeking the best and the highest, and giving out to the world the best and the noblest that shall come from this grand union of the best forces in the physical, intellectual and moral world.

With thanks from the delegates to the Woman's Suffrage association for the welcome to Butte our sisters have so cordially tendered us, permit me to close by saying:

"The royal forms of earth are two, with powers"

In one sweet chime;

The sovereigns cannot dwell in rival towers,

For Eden's prime

Was our dominion, and two souls were crowned

And each to each, their scepters silken bound."

Reports were received from various clubs throughout the state, showing when they had been organized, the membership, the progress of sentiment in the community, etc. A very interesting paper was then read by Mrs. Mary Long Alderson of Bozeman, the subject being "Preparation for Citizenship." Mrs. Alderson's paper was listened to with close attention and was warmly applauded. The paper is as follows:

It would seem from the recent vote in California that the granting of suffrage to women very soon is no foregone conclusion. However, the justice of giving woman equality before the law is very generally recognized even by the conservative mind, who question the expediency of putting the ballot in her hand in the present complicated state of public affairs. And when the justice of a cause is admitted it takes only time to overcome the inexperience, especially when, as that ardent opponent, the bishop of Albany, says, the "issue of woman suffrage, like death, seems to have 'all seasons for its own.'"

Woman is to-day an economic factor having an increasingly important part in all the world's work. She will soon be a political factor. The granting of suffrage to woman in the United States is inevitable, whether we wish it or not; whether it will bring good or evil results; whether we personally aid or retard it. It may be postponed for a longer or shorter time, but it is inevitable as progress and "who fights with progress fights in vain." In the fullness of time the daughters shall be called forth to share the privileges and duties now belonging to the sons.

But the majority of women are not ready to vote—they are not sufficiently well qualified, the opposition very truly argues. "They must make ready," we respond; "the exigencies of the times are such that the public encroaches upon the individual and the reserves are to be called out into the arena to aid in the battle for purity and right."

We do admit that all women are not as well fitted to vote as all men; it would be absurd to claim that a class of people taking no active part in public affairs knows as much about them as those who have participated in the privileges and duties of popular government. Charlotte Perkins Stetson says that "the more ignorant, the more people need the ballot," adding, "because they have the power, we have to bestir ourselves to educate them lest they hurt us." It seems to me it would be safe and wiser to educate them first and then give them the ballot when they are able to help the world's development to better things.

It is because the leaders of the equal suffrage movement realize that many women are ignorant of the essential principles of representative government that the work of the national association is largely educational—both in the course of study planned for clubs and individuals and in the sending out of speakers to arouse the indifferent and inspire the discouraged.

Yet there are to-day many women more eminently qualified than many men.

Individual women of rare gifts and courage are showing what they are capable of—what they have the power to do—they are cutting off objection and encouraging less courageous women to venture into the arena, show their ability and claim their due. Equal suffragists would be glad to see an educational, property or character qualification adopted, if such were practicable, or they would be glad to have suffrage extended gradually to women, as they shall qualify themselves according to any reasonable test, first one class and then additional classes being enfranchised as men have been enfranchised in all countries.

But in whatever way women may be permitted to come into their political heritage, let them come as a well-prepared body politic. It is old-fashioned now to be a simper and the new women to be up with the times are "organized to death," as one writer inelegantly expressed it, in their efforts to become informed.

Yet all are not living up to their privileges. In a late number of the Woman's Column we read of a poor woman whom a missionary found in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky who had never heard of Jesus Christ because, as she humbly and regretfully said, "You see, I live so far from the big road and John never tells me nothin'." This is a pathetic instance of narrowness and poverty of life—so far from the big road and John never tells me nothin'."

But it is suggested that many a woman living in the heart of civilization

may be proportionately, though less excusably, ignorant—living far from the "big road" of thought, action and progress and as much shut out from the intellectual, social and business world in which moves her John "who never tells her nothin'" her mental growth and development arrested by her shutting herself out from sympathy with outside interests.

The world needs good mothers to-day, but not more than it needs intelligent, enlightened mothers who keep in touch with humanity and "count no human interest foreign."

The pain of the world—the sin of the world our darlings must share and for love of our own we must do what we can to make the great world in which our daughters as well as our sons must live purer and better.

Rev. Dr. Carlos Martyn, when asked why preachers meddled with politics, answered: "Because politics meddle with us." In the same way we mothers must meddle with politics because politics meddle with us. We must combine with men whether as voters or not-voters to make the political situation more wholesome.

So I say to you mothers and to all women, "Live up to your privileges. Enter every avenue of knowledge and development open to you." Woman's emancipation in all directions will grow out of her universal education. Men have pioneered the way. It is woman's mission to guard more closely and sacredly things that defend home life.

The organization committee of the national association very appropriately devoted the second year in its course of study to finance and tariff. I trust many of us will have the benefit of taking this course, but whether we will have or not women who possess property, and indeed all women, should be trained in common business principles and taught to know the value of money and of time, for time is money. Many of our women are skilled financiers from their experience in meeting from a small income the varied demands of the family and home; but again how many women have no thought except to get what they can and spend what they get. Every married woman should have an allowance for the expenses of the household, her own and children proportioned to her husband's income, should keep a record of money spent, and should keep her expenses within her income. This would help to teach her the value of money, of which so many women have no idea. That is why they are always ready to vote a special tax, without much, if any, thought of how the money has been or will be expended.

Hettie Green and many other women are noted financiers. Many women, especially in the West, have made ranches, stock and other business enterprises and, also the professions, pay well. The western woman from the conditions of life surrounding her is apt to be a better business woman than her eastern sister. A fortune left her by her husband is less likely to be devoured by sharks of lawyers or lost through her business ignorance. Every woman should know enough of business principles to care for what she possesses or may possess. Men don't think women have much good business practical sense. Let women acquire this and how soon their votes would be desired.

"The best way to reach resumption is to resume," said Horace Greeley, and Henry B. Blackwell adds: "The best way for women to secure political rights is to engage in political work. Let women study the problems of civil service reform, tariff, finance, immigration, temperance, peace and war. Voting is only one form of political power—when the other forms are exercised, this cannot long be withheld. One forward step prepares for the next."

Women are already mayors of cities and members of legislatures and they may in time occupy other official positions. But this direct participation is not at all essential to a personal interest in public affairs greater than they have shown. Women's opinions on public questions may not be heard, but Thomas Wentworth Higginson says: "There is but one cure for crude opinions—to live through them and come out into more mature judgment. The remedy for ignorance is not deeper ignorance, but knowledge."

Women are to emancipate themselves politically, as in other directions. The work is in their hands. Let them as citizens prove their interest, express their desire to vote, show that they are qualified, and how long will they have to wait for an invitation to participate in active citizenship?

A reform movement must be educational. The difficult task of any suffrage association is to overcome the indifference of women, to awaken an interest in the majority who are ignorant or careless of the effect public matters have on their own lives and homes. The earnest-hearted woman who has tried to alleviate the suffering in the world or to right its wrongs sees how much power a ballot would add to the influence she possesses.

Let women cultivate independent thinking, liberality of judgment, charity of thought, willingness to hear all sides of a question, and to differ without friction; let them learn to work together without dissension—in brief, to govern themselves that when they come into their political heritage they will vote according to reason, not sentiment.

In the fall of 1895, when the question of woman suffrage was being agitated in Massachusetts before the taking of the referendum vote, one of the prominent dailies of Boston opposed the extension of suffrage to women mainly because of her tendency to allow her emotions to overrule her judgment. This is a fault which women share in common with men. Yet it cannot be denied that women as a class are much more emotional than men. This is largely the fault of their training. Education will teach them to control their emotions and take reason for a guide. At the present, however, there is hardly anything they need more than to cultivate a judicial mind—a mind that will weigh consequences, will not be deceived by sophistries and that does not delight in social convulsions and agitations. The tendency of popular government is to create the emotional state of mind. Without it the cunning politician and the agitator would have no material to work upon in the carrying out of their schemes (always experimental if not corrupt). They could not humbug the people as they do continually now.

W. K. Brooks, in an excellent article in the November Forum, speaking of this emotional element and of its leading from one ill-considered effort at reform to another, says: "In the past it has been said that women have been in the van of this sort of agitation. Let the women of the United States see it that it is never said of them, and they need not wait long for any

(Continued on Page Twelve)

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